

Smarts Make Thingamabobs More Effective When Protecting Stuff

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ON CYBER PATROL



This is a quick story about why you must apply smarts when using thingamabobs to protect your stuff. If we started talking about policy, training and technology, eyes would glaze over, minds would wander and eventually something bad would happen because someone got bored. So, we're going to keep this simple. Policy is the set of rules and regulations created by combining knowledge, experience and best business practices. Training is transferring these elements to people that need to know them to do their job. For the sake of this story, we're going to combine policy and training into the general category of "smarts."

The next part is technology and technology often takes the physical form of a box. Boxes will often have wires, plugs and sometimes antennae sticking out of them. Normally we'd refer to one of these boxes as a widget. However, as the term widget has been taken over by the social media crowd, let's use the time-honored "thingamabob." For those of you more familiar with "thingamajig," that is an acceptable alternative taken from the officially approved list of non-specific devices. By the way, all those wires and plugs – they're called "doohickies."

The thingamabob in question is a device that when installed and used correctly protects a little corner of the LandWarNet. It effectively keeps intruders' hands off your information, code and operating systems. Drawing again from the list of non-specific names let's call these your "cyber stuff," or just plain "stuff" for short. For those of you who insist on being technical, the thingamabob we are talking about is a network firewall.

Back to the story. In an Army facility someplace the staff was told it was necessary to secure (to the IA person this meant configure) their thingamabob. They earnestly indicated that, indeed, they did this conscientiously all the time by putting the firewall -- oops, thingamabob -- away every night.....in a safe. Yep -- in a safe. True story.

As some of you may know, this particular thingamabob has to have its doohickies plugged into the larger thingamabob in order for it to work. Also, (spoiler alert) bad guys are trying to break into the larger thingamabob 24/7, 365. However, the people securing this critical security technology that needs to be constantly running in order to be effective were not malicious, or even unintelligent. They simply had not had the correct training nor were they familiar enough with policies to do the right thing. It was suggested to these people that they might want to upgrade their smarts to the next version so that their thingamabob would do the best job possible protecting their stuff. Before you laugh at this story ask yourself, are your smarts up to date?